

**Remarks**

Referring to sections 1 & 2 of the Office Action, claims 14 to 19 have been cancelled consistent with the applicant's previous election of the Group I claims (claims 1 to 13 & 19).

With reference to section 3 of the Office Action, the specification has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. In addition, a further two parts of the description have been amended to correct errors relating to the numerals used in said parts of the description.

Referring now to sections 4 to 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner will note that independent claims 1, 9, 10 & 11 have each been amended in a manner believed to patentably distinguish the present invention over the disclosure of Subblah et al (US 6128659), and claim 19 has been similarly rewritten in independent form as claim 20.

The present invention relates to a method and arrangement for preventing the premature blocking of connection requests. This is achieved in a communications network where first and second nodes are linked by a plurality of AAL2 VCCs by arranging the nodes to exchange messages including a path identifier as a means of agreeing an identity of one of said AAL2 VCCs to host a virtual channel in satisfaction of the connection request. In one particular embodiment, the first node sends a connection request to the second node identifying an AAL2 VCC to be used to host a virtual channel on said VCC, but, where the identified AAL2 VCC is not acceptable to the second node for reasons of congestion, for example, the second node returns a negotiation request message to the first node identifying an alternative one of the plurality of AAL2 VCCs rather than blocking the connection request from the first node as would happen in a conventional arrangement. It should be noted that a path identifier as employed in the present invention is not the

same as a channel identifier (CID) which is also employed in the embodiments of the invention.

Subblah is a quite distinct arrangement from that of the present invention. Subblah is directed to resolving channel assignment conflict in a channel assignment in an ATM AAL2 negotiation procedure. As such, Subblah is directed to resolving the conflict that arises in a single AAL2 VCC between (any two) peer entities (nodes) when one peer entity requests a same channel in the AAL2 VCC as another peer entity, the requested channel being one of up to 256 channels provided by the AAL2 VCC and being identified by a channel identifier (CID). The conflict is resolved by allocating the CID to the peer entity having the higher priority. Subblah does not employ a path identifier since it is directed to resolving channel allocation conflict on a single AAL2 VCC between two entities.

In particular, Subblah teaches the following:

- 1) For a pair of peer entities at either end of an AAL2 VCC, one is *arbitrarily* designated master, and the other slave. This is arbitrary because Subblah teaches a random process is used to achieve this assignment (col 11, lines 4 - 12).
- 2) The status of master or slave is global, i.e is a simultaneous status for all CIDs (col 10, lines 43 - 45)
- 3) Where a collision on CID assignment occurs, the designated master denies assignment to its peer, and the designated slave confirms and transfers assignment to its peer (col 10, lines 49 - 56)
- 4) *Whenever there is a need to assess the status of the M/S flag, immediately after if not concurrent with that operation, the status is reversed, the master becoming slave and vice versa* (col 11, lines 38 - 42). Note that the operation in each peer is reliant on receipt of an assignment request message and the state of assignment initiated

on the given CID, therefore the operation at each end is not necessarily synchronized.

This comprises the entirety of what Subblah teaches on peer to peer operation. (Peer to multipeer and multipeer to multipeer are generalizations of the basic peer to peer mechanism, inasmuch as each peer treats the AAL2 VCC as a isolated instance in respect of the above).

Consequently, Subblah leads the reader into the understanding that there is a single M/S state for each entity for each AAL2 VCC linking it to a peer at the other end, and that one end must be master when the other is slave, and that this status changes on every collision in assigning the same CID.

Therefore, there is no suggestion in Subblah of exchanging messages between two nodes to agree an identity of a suitable AAL2 VCC from a plurality of such VCCs connecting such nodes for hosting a virtual channel in response to a connection request as a means of preventing premature blocking of such connection requests.

The Examiner's rejections of dependent claims 2 to 4, 6, 8, 12 & 13 are moot in view of the foregoing.

In view of the above, it is believed that the present application is now in order for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,



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